

WSDOT PROTOCOL FOR WEST NILE VIRUS BIRD SURVEILLANCE

BACKGROUND Dead birds testing positive for West Nile virus (WNV) are a sensitive indicator of disease activity in a geographical area. There appears to be a significant correlation between areas with high densities of dead bird reports and areas where human cases appear one to four weeks later. The Department of Health (DOH) has asked WSDOT to look for and collect dead birds to help determine if a possible WNV outbreak is occurring.

Testing dead jays, magpies, ravens, crows (*Corvidae* species) and raptors found in the state is important because of their high susceptibility to the virus. During the 1999 to 2002 nation wide WNV outbreak, birds positive for WNV were more commonly found dead. The small percentage of sick birds observed showed the following clinical signs: weakness; lethargy; tremors; inability to walk, fly, perch or hold their wings normally against their body; and were easily approachable by humans. These signs of generalized illness are NOT unique to WNV infection. Birds testing positive for WNV were often in fair to poor physical condition with loss of fat and muscle mass particularly noticeable in the breast muscles.

Birds that die suddenly in numbers at the same location are more likely to have died from causes other than WNV. Such die-offs are frequently associated with pesticide or natural poisoning incidents. Birds associated with these die-offs are not considered suitable specimens for WNV surveillance. This type of die off should be reported to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife or United States Fish and Wildlife Service office in your area.

Only freshly dead (less than 48 hours old) intact (not scavenged) bird carcasses can be tested. If the carcass has an odor, is soft and mushy, has skin discoloration, feathers or skin that easily rubs off, or has maggots present, it is too decomposed for testing.

SAMPLING If a dead jay, magpie, raven, crow or raptor is found inspect the bird to determine if it has died from obvious trauma. If there is no apparent trauma, double bag the bird. Two plastic zip lock collection bags and these instructions will be located in each WSDOT field vehicle. Use gloves or insert your hand into a plastic bag to pick up the dead bird. Though dead birds will not transmit West Nile virus, you should not pick up a dead animal with your bare hands. If you are using one of the plastic collection bags provided to pick up the bird, first turn the bag inside out. With your hand inside the reversed bag pick up the bird. Using your other hand turn the bag right side out, so the bird is now inside the bag. Seal the bag. Place the bagged bird inside the second zip lock bag. On a piece of paper write the date, time, address or specific location where you found the bird, your name, and a phone number where you can be reached. Place this paper inside the second bag. The bird should be chilled as quickly as possible by putting it in a cooler, refrigerated, or frozen. If wet ice is used, take precautions to insure that the bird does not get wet. If the bird must be kept over the weekend, the bird must be frozen.

Contact your local Health Department's environmental health program as soon as possible to inform them of your finding. A list of local Health Departments and their phone numbers is located on the back page of this document. The Health Department will inform you if they will be testing the bird for WNV. Some Health Departments will pick up the bird, others will ask that you deliver it to a specific location. If the Health Department informs you that they do not want to test your bird, do not be discouraged. In all cases they will document the date and location of the dead bird to help track WNV activity. The Health Department may have already tested several birds from your same area, and their resources are limited. Dead birds that will not be sampled can be disposed of in the trash.

The local Health Department will be sending the bird samples to the Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory, Pullman, WA. The laboratory will test birds weekly and submit electronic reports to Washington State Department of Health. DOH will place positive cases of WNV on their web site

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/Zoo/WNV/Surveillance03.html>.

Contact Norm Payton (360) 705-7848 or email paytonn@wsdot.wa.gov if you have any questions.

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT WEST NILE VIRUS CONTACTS

Organization	Contact Person	Phone
Adams County Health District	Rolf Strickland	(509) 659-3321
Asotin County Health District	Juan Caballero	(509) 758-3344
Benton-Franklin Health District	Susan Shelton	(509) 582-7761 x258
Chelan-Douglas Health District	Suzen Hyde/Charlie Brody	(509) 886-6458
Clallam County Health & Human Services	Alanna Landree	(360) 417-2258
Clark County Health Department	Lou Dooley	(360) 397-8122
Clark County Health Department	Yvonne Van Nostran	(360) 397-8428
Columbia County Public Health District	Ron Neu	(509) 382-3048
Cowlitz County Health Department	Audrey Shaver	(360) 414-5592
Cowlitz County Health Department	Vicki Washington	(360) 414-5591
Garfield County Health District	Ron Neu	(509) 843-3412
Grant County Health District	Keith Bell	(509) 766-7960
Grays Harbor County Public Health	Doug George	(360) 249-4413
Island County Health Department	Amanda Cerise	(360) 679-7350
Jefferson County Health and Human Services	Lisa McKenzie	(360) 385-9422
Kitsap County Health District	Dean Abbott	(360) 337-5274
Kittitas County Health Department	Lody Caldwell	(509) 962-7698
Klickitat County Health Department	Kevin Barry	(509) 773-4565
Lewis County Public Health	Steve Garrett	(360) 740-1233
Lewis County Public Health	Chris Cooper	(360) 740-1417
Lincoln County Health Department	Ed Dzedzy	(509) 725-2501
Makah Tribe	Vince Cook	(360) 645 3263
Mason County Department of Health Services	Debbie Riley	(360) 427-9670 x358
Northeast Tri-County Health District	Jim Matsuyama	(509) 684-2262
Okanogan County Health District	Dave Hilton	(509) 422-7140
Pacific County Health and Human Services	Faith Taylor	(360) 875-9356
Public Health Seattle and King County	Gordon Clemans	(206) 205-4394
San Juan County Department of Health	Mark Tompkins	(360) 378-4474
Skagit County Department of Health	John Hadman	(360) 336-9380
Snohomish Health District	Randy Darst	(425) 339-5250
Spokane Regional Health District	Steve Main	(509) 324-1594
Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department	Nedda Turner	(253) 798-6462
Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department	Angela Freudenstein	(253) 798-4751
Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department	Joyce Seger	(253) 798-6031
Thurston County Public Health	Darrell Cochran	(360) 754-3355 x7524
Wahkiakum County Department of Health	David Riggs	(360) 795-6207
Walla Walla County-City Health Department	Brent Stenson	(509) 527 3290
Whatcom County Health and Human Services	Paul Chudek	(360) 676-6724
Whitman County Health Department	Jim Nunn	(509) 397-6280
Yakima Health District	Barbara Andrews	(509) 575-4040 x515